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FORWARD

Uniformity is essential to efficient correspondence operations. It prevents confusion and misunderstanding and thus speeds office production. Faster training and increased utilization of personnel also result. This Guide aims to provide for this standardization in the preparation and handling of Agency memorandums and letters.

The standards prescribed were not selected arbitrarily. They were adopted from many tested systems and a consideration of Agency-wide preferences and needs. The rules are relatively simple. However, some study will be necessary if they are to be mastered.

Certain correspondence of the Agency may require the use of special paper or formats and procedures not covered in this Guide. In such cases, the security of the operation or nature of the correspondence will govern the procedure and style to be used. Several components of the Agency have issued Correspondence Manuals and Instructions to meet local requirements. In most instances the basic standards of this Guide are applicable.

The U. S. Government Correspondence Manual (Chapters One and Two) recommends use of the "Block Format" for Government letters. Some Agencies have adopted that format but most and this Agency have not. Nonetheless, the balance of the U. S. Government Correspondence Manual provides excellent guidance in correspondence for administrative offices. Likewise the U. S. Government Printing Office Style Manual is another excellent reference, especially in the area of preferred capitalization, compound words, and punctuation. In this Agency Guide we have tried not to duplicate the material in those Federal Manuals.

DISTRIBUTION: By CIA Records Administration Officer

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INTRODUCTION

The material in this Correspondence Guide is arranged in the order considered by a writer or typist. A section on the style standards applicable to any one of the four main formats is provided in Chapter I to minimize repeating these standards in subsequent sections. Personnel should become thoroughly versed with this section since it is frequently referred to throughout the Guide. Separate sections in Chapter II describe memorandums on letterhead stationary, plain bond, and Informal Office Memorandum forms, and in Chapter III the format of letters. The remaining chapters cover TOP SECRET material, correspondence prepared for the Director, and finally assembling the correspondence to go forward for signature. Each section is followed by an exhibit illustrating the format described.

This Guide is bound in loose leaf form to allow insertion of changes, or supplemental instructions developed at operating levels. It is recommended that such instructions be reproduced on colored stock, and inserted in the proximity of the guidance material which they supplement.

This Guide concerns only the preparation and handling of memorandums and letters. It does not contain information on other forms of communication such as dispatches, telegrams and cables, nor does it concern the flow and control of mail within the Agency. The issuances listed in Appendix A cover such subjects.

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An Agency Correspondence Manual was originally prepared by the Records Division, General Services Office, in April 1952. In May 1955 the Records Management Staff prepared the Correspondence Style and Procedures Handbook [redacted] and rescinded the 1952 issue. The Handbook was updated in 1965 and a limited supply produced for training purposes. This current update was prepared in March 1972 for limited distribution and [redacted] discontinued. A full revision of this Correspondence Guide is contemplated and will include changes resulting from comments and suggestions received.

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